Tourism, Environmental Stewardship, and Community Engagement
on Andros Island, Bahamas

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Executive Summary

Tourism has long been the mainstay of the Bahamian economy, accounting for 40-60% of the country’s GDP and employing half of its population. Much of the focus of tourism development in the Bahamas has been on large enclave resorts that alter the natural environment to create a manufactured tropical sanctuary. Historically, Black Bahamians were disadvantaged in these development projects and excluded from tourist destinations in furtherance of “enclave” tourism that separated tourists from the local community. As a result of heavy foreign ownership in this type of tourism, much of the revenue from tourism in the Bahamas is lost to other country’s economies. In recent years, the Bahamas Ministry of Tourism has begun an effort to advertise the unique benefits of the diverse islands throughout the Bahamas. The Bahamian government is also seeking to increase capacity for more locally controlled tourism operations, in an effort to help local communities retain the economic benefits of tourism. This has seen success in the bonefishing industry, where all guides are local and many control their own operations. However, SCUBA diving operators continue to hire predominantly foreign staff, faced with difficulty in finding qualified Bahamian instructors.

The Small Hope Bay Foundation is a new non-profit organization located on Andros Island in the Bahamas, with a mission of creating capacity for an economically and environmentally sustainable Andros. The Foundation seeks to develop programming that will benefit the environment and increase local capacity to work in the dive industry. This report seeks to help the Foundation tailor its fundraising and programming to further its mission by asking: (1) How can the Foundation and the tourism industry on Andros Island mobilize the perceptions and values of tourists to improve the impacts of tourism on the local economy and the environment?; and (2) What barriers to community engagement in the dive industry must be overcome to maximize the potential social and environmental benefits of tourism development?

After introducing the Foundation and the Project in Part I, Part II of the report provides an overview of tourism as a development strategy. The report describes the costs of mass enclave tourism and the emergent alternatives, such as ecotourism and community-based ecotourism, that have recently grown in popularity.

In Part III, the report describes the specific case background, beginning with a brief overview of tourism in the Bahamas. Part III goes on to describe tourism on Andros Island, and the formation and work of the Small Hope Bay Foundation. Part IV builds on this discussion by detailing the study objectives and research questions that were the focus of this Project and describing how these objectives were designed to further the mission of the Foundation. Part V then describes the research methodology for both interviews of tourists, which took place during the summer of 2019, and interviews of dive professionals, which took place from July 2019 through February 2020.

Part VI reports and interprets the results of the tourist interviews to assist the Foundation in understanding and mobilizing the values of dive tourists. The data demonstrate that tourists place functional, emotional, and epistemic value on both the quality of the natural environment and the environmental impacts of a tourism operation. Further, tourists place functional, emotional, epistemic, and social values on interacting with local community members and the positive effects that a tourism venture has on the local communities. These results suggest that
catering to tourists’ expectations does not require a highly modified, manufactured version of paradise, or providing an enclave where local people are excluded or portrayed in stereotypical fashion. Instead, tourists to Small Hope Bay value unique, natural environments, and efforts to protect them. The data further suggest that interactions with the local community can enhance rather than detract from the tourists’ experience, providing support for forms of tourism that engage and empower the local community. The report provides the Foundation with recommendations for designing and marketing programming that appeals to these specific types of values.

These programs alone, however, are unlikely to address the lack of capacity in the dive industry. In Part VII, the report describes the barriers to community engagement in the dive industry, focusing on interviews with dive professionals. These data demonstrate the challenges in employing more local Bahamians in the dive industry throughout the Bahamas, with institutional barriers limiting capacity. This suggests that to increase capacity in the dive industry, the Foundation may need to influence broader institutional change.

The report notes, however, that there may be some tension between overcoming these institutional barriers and the Foundation’s goals of environmental sustainability. Thus, deciding which institutional changes to support will require a careful identification of objectives and evaluation of trade-offs. In making these decisions, the report recommends that the Foundation engage the local community and ensure that all decisions are made collaboratively with a broad range of stakeholders. In doing so, the Foundation has the opportunity to develop programming that preserves the environment and improves community engagement, while at the same time appealing to tourists. By working with the community to develop environmental sustainability and community training programs that appeal to tourists, the Foundation can work toward supporting a successful community-based ecotourism model.
I. Introduction

The Small Hope Bay Foundation is a new non-profit organization with a mission to create capacity for an economically and environmentally sustainable Andros. Andros Island is one of the “Out Islands” of the Bahamas popular among tourists for activities such as fishing, diving, snorkeling, and birdwatching. The Foundation is developing its strategic mission and programming, which will build upon existing efforts by Small Hope Bay Lodge in both environmental stewardship and community outreach. Small Hope Bay Lodge is a family owned resort that caters primarily to American, Canadian, and European tourists for diving, fishing, and other activities, and accommodates approximately forty guests. Many guests dive the nearby reefs, and the Lodge has long devoted substantial resources toward improving marine health, including installing and maintaining coral nurseries and implementing mooring lines to reduce anchor damage. It has also worked to help the community share in the benefits of these programs through its swim and dive programs for youth and teens. An internship program also helps young Bahamians develop diving and hospitality skills that will be useful for potential employment in the tourism sector. Other programs to support the community include converting the local batik factory, Androsia, to make masks for front-line workers during the covid-19 crisis. The Foundation plans to grow these activities and is researching additional programs, such as rehabilitating urchin populations to control algae and protect the reef.

The goal of this Master’s Project is to provide information that will assist the Foundation in developing its programming. First, this Project examines the opinions of tourists to the Lodge to determine how the Foundation might best mobilize tourists’ opinions and values to improve the impacts of tourism on the local economy and the environment in Andros. Historically, development projects in the Bahamas were tailored toward tourists’ expectations and resulted in massive changes to ecological landscapes and exclusion of local people (Cleare, 2007; Karrow & Thompson, 2016). Recent research, however, demonstrates that tourists have an interest in a wide variety of community-based tourism initiatives that can support programs that focus on experiences with local people and interactions with the natural environment (Euromonitor International, 2019). By examining what values tourists to Small Hope Bay place on their experiences with respect to the environment and the local community, this Master’s Project will help the Foundation design programming that can not only benefit the environment and improve economic impacts in the community, but appeal to tourists as well. This will help the Foundation
in targeting fundraising efforts to tourists and demonstrating to government institutions and other partner organizations that its programming can increase tourism to the island.

Second, this Project examines opinions of dive operators throughout the Bahamas to help the Foundation understand the barriers to local engagement in the dive industry. The Foundation seeks to train local teens in diving and professional skills to provide increased capacity for employment in the dive industry, which provides job security due to the need for more local professionals. However, this Project identifies larger institutional barriers that must be addressed for that increased capacity to be realized. This will help the Foundation develop its strategic plan for working with the government and other institutions to bring forth broader change.

II. Tourism as a Development Strategy

A. The Economic Importance of Tourism in the Caribbean

Tourism is the largest industry in the world and has been a key focus of economic development strategies for more than fifty years (Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008; Theobald, 2005). The World Travel & Tourism Council has suggested that tourism and travel is the largest sector in terms of gross output, value added, capital investment, employment, and tax contributions (Theobald, 2005). The direct contribution of travel and tourism to GDP in 2018 was over 2.75 trillion dollars, representing 3.2% of global GDP (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2019). The tourism and travel industry generated over 122 million jobs directly in 2018, accounting for 3.8% of global employment (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2019). As of 2019, the industry was expected to continue to grow in the coming decade, both in terms of absolute and relative contribution to GDP and employment (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2019).

Tourism has grown to be particularly critical for the economies of many Small Island Developing States (SIDS) (Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008). This is particularly true in the Caribbean, which is often cited as “the most tourist-dependent area in the world” (Karrow & Thompson, 2016). Facing the loss of traditional export markets, many Caribbean nations have turned to tourism development in pursuing economic security (Pantin, 1999). Tourism can have especially significant impacts in generating income and employment in more remote areas where other forms of development are limited (Archer et al., 2005).
B. The Costs of Mass Enclave Tourism

In some cases, however, the political, social, and environmental costs may outweigh the economic benefits of tourism (Archer et al., 2005; Gössling, 2003). In many island nations, tourism infrastructure creates “enclaves”, where tourists enjoy holidays from western hotels, separated from the rest of the destination country (Britton, 1982). These resorts control both the cultural and physical environments, limiting interactions between residents and guests to fulfill stereotypes (Britton, 1982; Freitag, 1994; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2016). The origins of these practices are colonial in nature (Britton, 1982).

From an economic perspective, mass tourism development has created a neo-colonial structure by creating a dependence on foreign markets, shifting power from local and regional authorities into the hands of foreign corporations, and generally increasing the level of foreign dominance and control (Archer et al., 2005; Gössling, 2003; Khan, 1997). As a result, enclave tourism generally results in few positive effects on the local economy, with much of the revenue lost to other countries’ economies through a process known as leakage (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2016). Enclave tourism also leads to inequitable income distributions and uneven development, often exacerbating social disparities and social conflicts (Britton, 1982; Freitag, 1994; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2016).

Historically, mass tourism developments have alienated local communities as infrastructure projects are designed to meet the desires and expectations of tourists (Britton, 1982; Gössling, 2003; Nepal et al., 2016). These types of tourism may also result in the commodification of local culture and customs at the expense of local pride and identity (Archer et al., 2005). Power imbalances between tourists and local communities can likewise foster resentment and inhibit the growth of a national consciousness (Archer et al., 2005).

Mass tourism is also associated with a long history of environmental degradation (Gössling, 2003; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2016). Tourism can create increasing demands on the already scarce natural resources in an area for tourists’ use (Archer et al., 2005). Enclave tourism, in particular, is highly resource consumptive, degrading the natural environment and creating high demand for electricity and water that may strain local resources (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2016). Poorly-planned tourism development can also destroy irreplaceable natural environments, an effect that is related to the magnitude of development and volume of visitors (Archer et al., 2005).
C. Ecotourism and Community-Based Ecotourism as Alternatives to Mass Tourism

In recent decades, new alternative forms of tourism have increased in popularity, which theoretically are able to address some of the issues inherent in mass tourism. The concept of alternative tourism is broad and varies depending on context in both place and time (Macleod, 2005). Particularly relevant for this Project, ecotourism and community-based ecotourism are growing in popularity as consumers increasingly demand more “remote,” “natural,” and “exotic” environments (Scheyvens, 1999).

Definitions of ecotourism vary but often reflect dual principles of conserving the environment while benefiting local communities (Scheyvens, 1999). For example, the International Ecotourism Society defines ecotourism as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of local people, and involves interpretation and education” (The International Ecotourism Society, 2015).

From an environmental perspective, ecotourism can serve as a positive force in conserving the environment (Archer et al., 2005). Not only do certain tourism enterprises create activities that directly seek to positively impact the environment but they can educate tourists to appreciate the environment as well (Archer et al., 2005). Further, tourists are attracted to areas of high scenic beauty and diverse wildlife (Archer et al., 2005), so tourism can encourage the creation of protected areas designed to safeguard or preserve natural ecosystems (Gössling, 2003). Tourism income can provide income through entrance fees and donations, which can be directly invested to conserve and improve a destination’s natural resources (Archer et al., 2005; Gössling, 2003).

However, ecotourism is not without its drawbacks. Communities can be overlooked as stakeholders in environmental management decisions relating to tourism (Dimmock & Musa, 2015; Lucrezi et al., 2017; Stem et al., 2003). If benefits from “green,” “eco,” and “community” initiatives are not shared across the community but are captured by a small group of elites, the resulting imbalances undermine the positive prospects for the community as a whole (Nepal et al., 2016). Moreover, justifying tourism for the sake of conservation and local livelihood can also serve as a “green washing” strategy that does little to promote environmental protection (Nepal et al., 2016). With ecotourism used as a marketing tool, the emerging businesses can unintentionally alienate the local communities they are intended to benefit (Scheyvens, 1999).
Community participation is therefore necessary for ecotourism to provide the sought-after local benefits and incentives for communities to conserve natural resources (Brandon, 1996). Community-based approaches to ecotourism attempt to address these issues by seeking to promote both quality of life and conservation of resources (Scheyvens, 1999). Such small-scale development initiatives create opportunities for local empowerment, promote local ownership, strengthen local identity, and improve economic equity (Khan, 1997). In determining whether ecotourism promotes conservation and development at the local level, Scheyvens suggests that such ecotourism ventures should be assessed in terms of their impacts on economic empowerment, psychological empowerment, social empowerment, and political empowerment (Scheyvens, 1999).

Research suggests that Caribbean tourists’ interest in community-based tourism is limited by lack of familiarity, with tourists hesitant to try something unknown (Euromonitor International, 2019). This research suggests that growing community-based tourism awareness to align with tourists’ interests can generate interests in community-based tourism among visitors (Euromonitor International, 2019). Moreover, it suggests locally developing wildlife tourism as an area that is of high level of interest to tourists that, as of yet, as resulted in few benefits (measured by community involvement, employment potential capacity, activity price, and number of businesses) (Euromonitor International, 2019).

Community-based ecotourism therefore provides a potential opportunity to design experiences at the local level, without the environmental modifications and exclusion of local people that is common of mass tourism. However, it is necessary to understand the context and what tourists’ interests may be in any location to attract tourists and realize the potential of bringing income to local communities. With its history of mass tourism but emerging ecotourism market, the Bahamas provides an interesting opportunity for developing environmentally friendly activities that provide direct opportunities for local community members.

III. Case Background: Andros Island and the Small Hope Bay Foundation

A. History of Tourism in the Bahamas

Tourism has long been a mainstay of the Bahamian economy (Cleare, 2007). Over the past decades, tourism has accounted for between 40-60 of the country’s GDP and employed half
of its population (Bahamas Investment Authority, n.d.; Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, 2009). While the population of the Bahamas was just over 350,000 as of the last census (Lowe et al., 2010), more than half a million tourists visit the Bahamas each month, for a total of more than 6 million visitors each year (Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, 2018).

Much of the tourism in the Bahamas is centered on the major population centers of Nassau and Grand Bahama. In 2019, of nearly 1.8 million “stopover” visitors (defined as guests who stay at least 24 hours and do not use a ship for accommodation (Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, 2016a)), 79% visited Nassau, 7% visited Grand Bahama, and 21% visited the remaining 12 islands—known as the “Out Islands”—combined.

Tourism in Nassau consists primarily of large enclave resorts that are predominantly foreign-owned (Karrow & Thompson, 2016). Tourism in the Bahamas evolved to make the islands more consumable for the outside world through promotion of a tropical sanctuary (Moore, 2019). This model results from the expansion of tourism after World War II, when a white oligarchy controlled the government and developed a tourism model to cater predominantly to wealthy white Americans (Cleare, 2007). Much of the tourism infrastructure was built by slaves, whose descendants make up 75% of the population (Palmer, 1994). Historically, black Bahamians have been particularly disadvantaged in the tourism industry in the Bahamas, which often excluded them from tourist destinations in furtherance of “enclave” tourism that separated tourists from the local community (Karrow & Thompson, 2016; Palmer, 1994).

After the country achieved independence in 1973, the black-led Progressive Liberal Party attempted to regain national ownership of the tourism industry (Cleare, 2007). Ultimately, however, faced with global economic hardships, in 1992 the government once again resold most resorts to foreign development companies in a “renaissance” of the tourism industry (Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, n.d.; Cleare, 2007). As a result, the predominant model of tourism in Nassau remains foreign-owned enclave resorts, which has worked to compound historical racial divides (Karrow & Thompson, 2016). As much as 90% of tourism revenues in the Bahamas are lost to other countries’ economies (Karrow & Thompson, 2016).

Not all tourism to the Bahamas consists of enclave tourism in Nassau, however. In the 1990s, some modest tourism development occurred in the Out Islands, predominantly in the form of bonefishing lodges, many of which are locally owned (Cleare, 2007). Such tourism allows for
greater involvement from local community members than mass tourism. Local bonefishing guides are sought for their extensive knowledge on a host of variables that affect fish movements (Karrow & Thompson, 2016). Guiding for bonefish is a lucrative source of income for many local Bahamians, although the industry is not without its problems, and benefits are not always equally shared throughout the industry (Karrow & Thompson, 2016).

In recent years, the Ministry of Tourism has begun an effort to promote a multi-destination experience, advertising the unique benefits each of the Out Islands has to offer (Moore, 2019). Although mass tourism remains the primary focus for the Ministry of tourism, the country is also embarking on a community-based tourism initiative, seeking to increase capacity for locally controlled tourism operations (T. Simms, Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, personal communications, 2019-2020).

Visitors to the Out Islands are more likely than visitors to Nassau to visit the Bahamas for sporting activities such as fishing, diving, and snorkeling (Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, 2007). Fishing, in particular, has been a natural target for community-based tourism initiatives, as the Bahamas has already seen development of locally managed guiding operations (Karrow & Thompson, 2016). On the other hand, in the dive industry, local engagement remains limited, as most dive staff throughout the Bahamas, and particularly the Out Islands, are foreign expatriates (J. Birch, Owner, Small Hope Bay Lodge, personal communications, 2018-2020).

B. Andros Island

Andros is the largest island in the Bahamas yet it is one of the least densely populated (Hayes et al., 2015). Home to the third longest barrier reef system in the world, Andros draws tourists for activities such as bonefishing, diving, bird-watching, deep-sea fishing, sailing, and kayaking (Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, 2015; Hayes et al., 2015). In 2002, the government established five national parks on Andros to protect the barrier reef and associated habitat (Hayes et al., 2015). Since then, Andros has also been recognized as “the Bahamas premier ecotourism destination” and a “sports enthusiast’s paradise” (Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, 2015). Between 2003 to 2016, Andros received anywhere from 6,713 to 10,550 visitors on an annual basis (Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, 2016b), and it has been identified as an area for future growth (Hayes et al., 2015).

SCUBA diving is a popular draw on Andros. SCUBA diving is a multi-billion dollar industry and one of the world’s fastest-growing recreational sports (Schoeman et al., 2016).
Between one quarter and one third of tourists to Andros in any given year visit with the intention of diving (Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, 2010, 2015). Snorkeling is an even larger draw, with around 35-45% of guests partaking (Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, 2010, 2015). As with most of the Bahamas, however, the majority of dive and snorkeling guides on Andros are not Bahamian, and even fewer are from Andros (J. Birch, Personal Communications, 2018-2020). On the other hand, bonefishing, which more than half of visitors to Andros island participate in (Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, 2015), employs all Bahamian guides.

Small Hope Bay Lodge on Andros Island is a family owned and operated resort that was established in 1960. The oldest dive-focused resort in the Caribbean, the resort was started to cater to SCUBA divers seeking to enjoy its proximity to the barrier reef. In recent years, Small Hope Bay Lodge has expanded its customer base and begun to serve fishers, birders, and other non-diving tourists.

In 2018, the author, Emily Melvin, Jeff Birch, the owner of Small Hope Bay Lodge, and several other former guests and individuals affiliated with the resort, began working toward establishing the non-profit Small Hope Bay Foundation to continue and expand upon environmental stewardship and community outreach initiatives on Andros Island, including coral nurseries and swim and dive training programs for local Androsians. In furtherance of its mission to create capacity for an environmentally and economically sustainable Andros, the Foundation seeks to develop programming that will benefit the environment and increase local capacity to work in the diving industry. The hope is that training young Androsians in diving and professional skills, they will be suited to work in this industry, either on Andros or elsewhere.

IV. Study Objectives and Research Questions

Recognizing that a critical part of the economy on Andros is the tourism industry, this study focuses on issues that will help the Foundation tailor its fundraising and programing to further its mission. In particular, this study is focused on two questions: (1) How can the Foundation and the tourism industry on Andros Island mobilize the perceptions and values of tourists to improve the impacts of tourism on the local economy and the environment?; and (2) What barriers to community engagement in the dive industry must be overcome to maximize the potential social and environmental benefits of tourism development?
A. Motivations of Tourists to Small Hope Bay Lodge

At Small Hope Bay Lodge, tourists interact with local staff and bonefishing guides, and experience more natural environments through sporting activities. This study seeks to understand what these tourists value in a tourism experience, particularly as it relates to environmental quality and stewardship, interactions with community members, and impacts of tourism on the community. By understanding what tourists value in this regard and why, this will assist the Foundation in developing its programming in a way that is consistent with those values.

A recent study for the Compete Caribbean Partnership Facility found, for example, that tourists had a high level of interest in viewing wildlife in its natural habitat, but lower interest in social exchanges and volunteering (Euromonitor International, 2019). But this was a general study of Caribbean audiences, and tropical tourists’ preferences for specific features are island-specific, requiring island-specific management strategies focused on key marine or terrestrial features (Uyarra et al., 2005). This Project therefore helps to determine the specific interests of tourists to Small Hope Bay Lodge to develop such a strategy consistent with tourists’ values.

The environmental stewardship work done by the Lodge to date, such as its coral nurseries and mooring lines, has been funded primarily by guest donations. By developing programming that appeals to tourists’ values, the Foundation can build on that work and earn additional donations from future guests. Moreover, demonstrating that this programming is consistent with a viable tourism model will help the Foundation marshal support from other institutions, such as government and potential partner organizations. This will be necessary for achieving capacity building at a broader level.

In order to best identify the messaging surrounding this programming, this study seeks to identify what types of values tourists place on diving, fishing, and other activities. Understanding these values can help the Foundation tailor guest experiences relating to these programs according to the needs of the guests, enhancing satisfaction and making its programs more sustainable (Schoeman et al., 2016).

Schoeman and colleagues (2016) identified five categories of perceived values that were held by dive tourists:

1. Emotional value: “a social-psychological dimension that is dependent on a product’s ability to arouse feelings or affective states;”
(2) Functional values: “the perceived utility acquired from an alternative capacity for functional, utilitarian, or physical performance;”

(3) Social Value: “the perceived utility acquired from an alternative association with one or more specific social groups;”

(4) Risk value: “The utility derived from factors that reduce risk and are highly sought after;” and

(5) Epistemic value: “when a product arouses curiosity, provides novelty, or satisfies a desire for knowledge, or all.”

The study found that value could be determined from the intangible nature of a SCUBA diving experience, noting that the relative importance of these values could be used in tailoring dive offerings to customers (Schoeman et al., 2016).

This Project seeks to understand which of these values are reflected in tourists’ statements about the environment and community engagement to help the Foundation tailor its efforts. For example, if tourists place epistemic value on environmental stewardship efforts, the Foundation can highlight educational opportunities in designing conservation projects. On the other hand, if the functional value is high, the Foundation can highlight the actual impacts of those efforts on environmental quality. While the present study does not target dive tourists exclusively, the other tourism activities on Andros also may similarly rely on intangible benefits relating to the environment, the social atmosphere, emotional responses, and opportunities for curiosity or learning.

Thus, the present study seeks to combine two inquiries: (1) what features of a tourism destination do tourists value (particularly as it relates to the environment and local community), and (2) why do they value them (which perceived values are most related to those features)?

B. Barriers to Engagement in the Dive Industry

The Foundation’s work in community engagement cannot end with small-scale programs designed to meet tourists’ expectations. The Resort has been diligently training local youth to dive, yet (as with most Out Islands) most dive staff on the island continue to be hired from outside the Bahamas. Swim and training programs can therefore help local community members enjoy the benefits of the marine environment, but they may not be sufficient, on their own, to create local capacity in the industry.
Accordingly, this Project seeks to understand what barriers to community engagement in the dive industry must be overcome to maximize the potential economic and environmental benefits of tourism development. By assessing how local communities can be further integrated into the industry and what benefits that integration might achieve, the Foundation can identify potential partners and targets for influencing broader institutional change. Improving possibilities for local employment and reducing reliance on foreign staff can help ensure that the economic benefits of tourism are shared more broadly through the community, which is critical to increasing economic equity, promoting community empowerment, and developing local support for environmental protection (Brandon, 1996; Nepal et al., 2016; Stem et al., 2003).

V. Research Methodology

This study consists of two sets of semi-structured interviews. First, tourists to Small Hope Bay Lodge on Andros island were interviewed in the field from June to July of 2019. Next, dive professionals and dive operators were interviewed both in the field and by phone between July of 2019 and February of 2020. Informed consent was orally obtained prior to administering all interviews pursuant to Campus IRB No. 2019-0606.

A. Interviews of Tourists

Semi-structured interviews of forty-seven tourists were conducted at Small Hope Bay Lodge between June and July of 2019. Respondents were approached in communal dining and bar areas over breakfast in the morning, the lunch hours, and social hours in the afternoon in the evening. To the extent possible, all English-speaking guests who were at least eighteen years old and present in the communal areas during the times at which the interviewer was available were asked to participate. To avoid ethical concerns, guests were not approached when visibly intoxicated or caring for minor children. Guests’ departure dates were obtained from the Lodge, and guests were approached as late in their stay as possible to allow them to best form an impression of their stay prior to the interview.

Guests were interviewed in small groups of individuals who were traveling together. This method was selected because (1) the social context of the interviews made separating visitors undesirable and risked undermining trust and rapport with the interviewer; and (2) guests traveling together often had made decisions regarding their destination collectively, so multiple interviewers may have resulted in duplicative information. In some cases, due to activity
schedules, however, groups traveling together were interviewed as separate sub-groups. Overall, twenty-eight interviews were conducted of the forty-seven tourists. Five of the tourists were interviewed individually. No tourists refused to participate, but one of the forty-seven interviewees terminated the interview, although their spouse continued. All participants agreed to audio recording.

The interviews followed an outline of questions regarding the respondents’ reasons for choosing Andros as a destination, purpose of the visit, and views of the impacts of tourism on Andros on both the natural environment and the local community (Appendix A). The questions probed both perceived qualities of Andros and the respondents’ motivations in making vacationing decisions. The interviewer modified the order of the questions and asked follow-up questions based on the answers provided. The questions asked respondents how they took various factors into account and how those concerns compared with other considerations. In an attempt to minimize social desirability bias, the interviewer preceded questions regarding the impact of environment and community in vacationing decision-making with a general question regarding vacation decision-making priorities and an acknowledgment that choosing a vacation destination was a complicated choice that involved a number of factors.

An inductive and deductive coding system was used to analyze the data. To identify perceived values, the interviews were coded using a deductive approach based on the work of Schoeman and colleagues (2016), although the respondents were not specifically probed for those values during questioning. To identify which features of a tourism experience were important to tourists, an inductive approach was used in light of the fact that such preferences are island-specific (Uyarra et al., 2005); the data were analyzed to identify emergent themes. First the researcher identified narrow first-order categories and examined the categories for overlap, combining them and organizing them into a hierarchy of related themes. The themes related to general impressions of Andros and vacation decision-making priorities. In order to determine the types of values associated with both the environment and community decision-making categories, those themes were queried for the coded perceived values and overlap identified.

B. Interviews of Dive Operators and Dive Professionals

Seven interviews with dive professionals were conducted between July 2019 and February 2020. Interviewees included those in either management or training for dive organizations in the Bahamas. Three interviews were conducted in person, and four were
conducted by phone. Participants were first identified by a snowball method, by which contacts in the dive industry provided information regarding individuals who would likely be willing to participate. In order to obtain additional respondents, the Bahamas Tourism website was also searched for dive operators having a listed email address, and those contacts were contacted by email and asked to participate. Informed consent was obtained orally, and all respondents consented to audio recording.

The interviewer followed an outline of questions regarding the nature of the respondents’ dive operation, the number of Bahamians employed (where applicable), and their hiring practices (Appendix B). Respondents were asked for their opinions regarding the barriers to local engagement in the dive industry and the impact of the industry on both the community and the environment. The interviewer also asked how the qualifications of dive professionals compared to other applicants and how they felt the industry could improve its impacts. An inductive coding scheme was used to determine emergent themes.

VI. Understanding and Mobilizing the Values of Tourists

A. Results of Tourist Interviews

The following themes emerged as important to the respondents’ decisions for choosing vacation destinations: (1) atmosphere (the “vibe” or feel of the resort and/or community); (2) experiences (such as specific diving or fishing experiences, or other general experiences); (3) level of development; (5) logistics associated with getting to or enjoying a destination; (6) vacationing patterns and habits; (7) characteristics of service providers (e.g. hotel operators, dive operators, fishing guides); (8) the natural environment (including impact of the environment and the environmental quality of a destination); and (9) community involvement (including interactions with local staff and the impacts of tourism on the local community). While tourists were probed for their opinions regarding the natural environment and community involvement, those themes also occasionally emerged in response to general questions about general decision-making. Appendix Table A.1 contains data regarding themes (1)-(7). The remainder of this Section focuses on themes relating to the environment and community involvement.
1. Tourists’ Views Regarding the Environment

\[ a. \textit{Quality of the Natural Environment} \]

The quality of the natural environment arose as a frequent theme cited by tourists in their impressions of Andros and their environmental decision-making process. Many tourists had positive impressions of the natural environment on Andros, describing it as “pristine,” “clean,” and “healthy.” Many respondents indicated that the cleanliness of the environment compared favorably to other locations they had visited. For example, SHB032 stated that “It’s very clean. You know, like when we’ve been in Micronesia . . . and Borneo, Malaysia, it was just a lot of plastics in the water. A lot of stuff. You don’t, I haven’t seen much. It’s been a very pristine environment.” Similarly, SHB093 stated “You know I have to say it seems fairly unpolluted and clean and pristine, from what I can tell. The other places that we’ve visited, I don’t know there’s just so many people. It sort of spoils the natural beauty. But just yeah…. Andros seems pure and clean.” The quality of the water and marine environment was also frequently cited. For example, SHB111 stated “I think it’s beautiful. The water, it’s clean.”

The views were not uniformly positive, however. While some respondents indicated that Andros was relatively clean, others viewed the amount of trash as a negative. For example, SHB034 noted “we’ve noticed that there’s been quite a bit of trash in different areas, as well as bad cars, as well as a lot of homes with a lot of cars. . . So it needs a little bit of work. It needs to be a little bit more well, or taken care of and respected, I think.” Similar, SHB128 stated “I think, you know there are some areas of, that I think they haven’t taken care of well. For the most part I think it, I think it’s good but not great.”

Views on the quality of the marine environment were mixed as well. While SHB160 and SHB143 agreed that the water was clear and the corals beautiful, they noted that it was not as colorful as other locations:

- SHB160: Uh, the water is exceptionally clear.
- SHB143: Clear and the visibility is wonderful, the corals are nice
- SHB160: Temperature...
- SHB143: The variety of wildlife in both of the corals themselves, and the swim fish
SHB160: It's not quite as colorful, I think as some other places, with the coral.

SHB143: Cozumel...

SHB160: Cozumel, and, uh, I think I remember Indonesia being more colorful as well, um, and not quite the variety of big marine life, is always fun, so when you see big turtles and giant grouper, or, um, manta rays, in Indonesia, that we have these, uh, what were they 12, no feet meter, no 25 foot manta rays, bigger than a bus coming over you, so those kind of things.

SHB143: Which, we got spoiled early, sadly, but this is lovely, just the reef fish here are just wonderfully colorful and diverse

Likewise, SHB389 indicated that “there are places that are very unspoiled compared to some other places. There are places that I’m a little distressed to see all the algae growth. So and some broken coral, so it’s, it’s sort of middle of the pack in terms of environmental impact, I think.” One repeat visitor, SHB031, also noted a change in the quality from prior visits: “I think it’s a special place, so, I hope they can keep, you know, I would love to see the reef come back to where it’s not that carpet of algae, and, you know. I’m telling you, I remember, you know, thirty, forty years ago when I was a little kid lived on Davis Creek, the reefs were way different. They were way different. There was so much more color. So, hopefully it can come back, but... I don't know. I think it’s more than just one problem.”

Many respondents indicated that the quality of the environment was something that they would consider in deciding whether to return to a vacationing destination, although the level of importance placed on environmental quality varied. Some respondents indicated it was among the most important factors. For example, when asked what would make them want to return to a destination, SHB034 indicated “Nature more than anything, so views of nature, the way they take care of the environment, the locations that are pristine, etc. etc.” Similar, when SHB140 was asked how important environmental quality was, they responded “Well, very. Totally very. I would rather go to a place that was a tent in a really beautiful place, ecologically, than a swanky hotel that maybe had already, you know they’re dredging the beach, and the reef is all, you know in danger, and for sure. I think that’s, that’s a major part of where we go, to pick to travel.”

SHB253 also noted that their attention to this issue was growing, explaining “I would say natural
environment is definitely becoming higher on our list of, we want to be somewhere where you feel like you’re in a more natural setting.”

Other respondents, however, indicated that they would prioritize other concerns. For example, SHB211 indicated that “I look to typically, places that are kind of pristine and untouched,” but noted “honestly my primary concern if it wasn’t for my, you know, is money would be my primary concern.” Likewise, SHB420 indicated “it’s probably not at the top of our list, but I think we respect and value that.” One respondent (SHB407) noted that a barrier to using environmental quality in decision-making is the lack of information, explaining “If you’ve never been there, you might not know, until you get there. We’ve never specifically researched that before we went somewhere, but I think if we went somewhere and we saw that it was poor quality…”

With respect to the values associated with environmental quality, respondents cited functional, epistemic, and social values as key to their consideration of environmental factors. For functional values, respondents commonly suggested that the quality of the environment was important because it related to the quality of the experiences, including diving and fishing, themselves. For example, SHB189 indicated “I feel like those places are running out, and I want to see them before they’re gone.” SHB355 indicated “I want quality beaches, sit on the beach, sand, water, see-through, like snorkeling for everybody.” When comparing Andros to another destination and saying why they preferred it, SHB093 noted “I wouldn’t want to necessarily be wading through garbage and trash.”

Epistemic values, and namely a desire for novelty also arose with respect to concerns over the environment. SHB140 noted the “exciting” feeling associated with visiting a healthy environment, explaining “I mean, we’re covered in bug bites, we’ve got, you know jellyfish stings, [name omitted] stepped on a sea urchin, and we still are so excited about it! I mean, that’s, that’s nature, right? I mean that’s nature in the right place that’s, it’s got raw beauty, and raw nature, and that’s why we come.” Similarly, SHB301 pointed to the novelty of the experience associated with viewing healthy marine life, explaining “every day’s a little different. Every adventure is a little different. Even if you do it multiple times.” On the other hand, SHB143 described another vacation destination and indicated that exposure to an unhealthy environment can be a learning experience, noting that it could be good to visit “just to kind of see, you know, this is what it looks like when it’s not so great.”
Emotional values were less commonly associated with environmental quality statements but were occasionally cited. For example, SHB199 noted a concern with trash washing up on shore, explaining that “it kind of ruins the vacation for us” and “it’s, um, depressing to see that.” Likewise, SHB420 used value-laden language suggestive of an emotional response, noting that “you guys haven’t just destroyed the beach to make it easy for guests just to go lay on the beach.”

b. Environmental Impact

Respondents frequently indicated that the negative environmental impact of tourism in Andros was quite low. Often these views coincided with an opinion regarding relatively low levels of development on Andros, including small numbers of dive boats or fishers on the water. For example, SHB154 indicated “I think it’s really so simple here, it’s not, it’s not very built up or anything.” Many had positive views regarding the impacts of various conservation projects on the island, comparing them favorably to other locations where they had seen few or no similar efforts.

Some respondents did express concerns over the lack of mooring buoys, however. SHB031 indicated “just like to see the mooring buoys a little bit more, but I know that’s, to me I’m a, I come here once week a year, so I know that’s a much more complex issue than simply put the buoys there.” SHB036 noted that the conservation efforts had mixed results, explaining “I don’t know how effective growing a coral and the coral nursery is when you’re throwing out anchors, you know? You grow a little piece of coral, you know, over the course of a couple years and destroy a coral that’s 50 years old with one anchor shot and there’s dozens of those in a week.” SHB145 expressed a positive opinion of the mooring buoys but noted that “it should be a part of what the resort does, not ask for contributions. That’s just an opinion.”

Respondents were also mixed with respect to whether they would consider environmental impact in deciding whether to visit or return to a destination. As with environmental quality, some placed it high on the list, while others indicated it was not as important. When SHB093 was asked whether they’d consider what kind of impact a vacation operation has on the environment, they responded “Honestly, no. I’d like to think that I would, but we don’t, you know, we haven’t. I think probably most people don’t.” Still others indicated that their focus on this issue was changing. For example, when asked whether they consider what kind of impact a fishing operation has on the environment when choosing a destination, SHB107 said “I would
say no. But probably growing.” As with environmental quality, some respondents indicated that it would be something they may consider but were unsure as to how to get the information.

With respect to the values expressed relating to environmental impact, the respondents raised functional, epistemic, and emotional values associated with environmental impact. For functional values, as with environmental quality, many respondents noted how environmental impact affected the quality of their experiences. SHB249 cited lack of overfishing as a benefit to Andros, noting “I’d rather go somewhere that's not fished with the frequency of certain destinations that we’ve been to. So the least amount of fishermen, the least amount of pressure on the fish in the water, kind of attracts me to where our destinations would be.” Similarly, SHB160 indicated that lack of concern over the environment would be indicative of lack of concern more broadly, explaining “I think that a dive operation that had negative impacts on its place of business would just be negative in other ways, like it would be crowded.”

Several tourists highlighted epistemic values in association with conservation projects, noting that they enjoyed learning about environmental protection. For example, divers SHB143 and SHB160 described another resort that offered week-long volunteer opportunities, and indicated that was an opportunity they would be interested in. SHB160 noted “I thought it was a really interesting idea, I think diving pulls people who are environmentally minded are drawn to this sport.” Similarly, when SHB189 was asked whether they were aware of conservation activities in Andros and indicated that they would “love to learn more. It’s a personal interest of mine, to be able to kind of see it in the lodge, or hear about it, yeah, would be like intriguing for me.”

Emotional values included concerns with operators who prioritized money over the environment. For example, fishers SHB110 and SHB140 expressed disapproval of another location that as “just straight up, it’s for profit, more than it is fishing or the environment.” Other emotional values reflected a respect and appreciation for nature and negative emotional consequences associated with negative impacts. Fisher SHB368 also highlighted catch and release as being important, noting “we get really upset if we see the fish struggle a little bit.” Similarly, SHB269 indicated “it’s just like we are visitors, like we respect the ocean. It was, talking to people even about sharks where it’s just like, we’re in their house. It’s just, it’s respect of nature and like, honoring that space, instead of saying, like, well we’re gonna do whatever we want.” Respondents associated emotional values with participating in conservation activities. For
example, SHB189 indicated “You know there’s certainly your footprint on the environment is significant, I mean we’re using, we’re drinking fresh water, so it’d be kind of neat to be able to do something to give back.”

2. Tourists’ Views Regarding Community Involvement

Many of the respondents had positive impressions of the impact of tourism on the local communities in Andros, expressing opinions that there was more local engagement than in other destinations they had visited. Several individuals indicated that it provided a good job source and a boon to the local economy. Some highlighted the nature of the relationship between the resort and the staff as being beneficial. For example, SHB347 noted that the resort “doesn’t just hire a local saying you’re good enough to cook and clean for me, but I’m not gonna have you doing the important stuff.” SHB142 similarly noted that local people were working with guests and “not just in the kitchen and picking up trash and fixing things.”

A few respondents observed the lack of local employment on the dive staff as a negative factor. For example, SHB494 noted “I think it’s heavy on the outsiders, to be honest. I would love to see more local people in.” Yet some respondents (including divers) did not mention the prevalence of foreign staff. For example, SHB093 stated:

Yeah, and not to pick on any nationality, but like if, you know like foreign nationals like Chinese or you know Indians, or you know whatever, were brought in, you know you wouldn’t get the local culture. You know, and if you come to the Bahamas, you want to pretty much see Bahamians. You can immerse yourself in the culture. That’d be hard do if everyone, you know, people from other part of the world come here just to work at the resort. That would be a big turnoff for me in not wanting to return.

Moreover, some of the respondents noted that they were limited in their exposure to the island beyond the resort. Some indicated that they could not assess community impact on Andros for that reason.

Opinions among respondents varied as to whether it was important that a dive operation hire local staff versus foreign staff. Some respondents indicated it was very important. For example, SHB034 indicated “local is important” and stated “I think that takes a lot of precedence for me. If I were to put it in a percentage maybe 60%.... So cause that’s pretty important for me. Hire locals. Support the locals. Especially with that type of kind heart. And attitude. That’s really important for me.” Many respondents, however, indicated that while they appreciated seeing
local staff, it would not ultimately affect their decision to return to a place. For example, SHB211 indicated “I mean, it’s good to see they hire a local, but in reality, no it’s not my primary concern.”

As with environmental attitudes, there was an indication of a shift in attitudes regarding the importance of local staff engagement in choosing a vacationing destination. SHB031 noted “Previously we haven’t really considered it, but going forward it will be heavily considered.” SHB065 similarly explained “that probably didn’t weight as heavy to me before this trip. But after being here I think it’s pretty awesome.”

A range of values were implicated in the role of community impacts in tourists’ decision-making, including emotional, functional, epistemic, and social values. Emotional values often were associated with providing income to support local people. SHB032 explained that they preferred to choose travel destinations “to bring money, to you know, help the local economy. I don’t want to go someplace that doesn’t really need my money.”

Traveling companions SHB200 and SHB222 expressed similar sentiments. SHB200 noted that “I feel better about that choice, knowing that, like my decision to come here is not just for my own enjoyment, but it’s, you know, it’s helping the greater community.” SHB222 added “especially in the way we’re all describing it now, to us I think a feeling is very important. And so, all of those things create a feeling, so I think to decide to return would be to want to return to that feeling.”

Tourists also cited local jobs as contributing to the local sense of community. SHB170 noted “I think it gives them a sense of community for themselves… It’s their country. They’re not resentful anymore. All the locals [sic] coming in taking away the jobs.” However, SHB170 added the caveat that it did not ultimately factor into their decision of whether to return.

The type of jobs and interactions with guests that were observed by tourists also evoked emotional values. SHB269 explained the importance of treating staff like people, noting that in other destinations staff were expected to “kind of be invisible.” They said “here it’s like, oh you’re a person… Weird right?! But it’s like, it’s so important to be, like we’re not just building the local economy by creating drones, right? We’re not saying, like you’re a person? Great, stay out here. It’s like, you’re a person, let’s build you, let’s give you more skills, and like, the goal isn’t even always for you to work here forever. But like this gives you jobs and greater opportunity. I think that’s a big deal.”
Functional values were implicated as well. Many tourists indicated a preference of local hiring because it would improve their experience to have a guide who knew the area. SHB128 and SHB249 indicated that they enjoyed fishing with Bahamian guides for that reason. SHB249 explained “Yeah, and that, and they’ve done it from an early age. Been brought down by their parents. And we fish with guys here, as well, who are bringing it down to their kids right now, so it’s… You know, they know the waters. They really do. So I think that’s important.” SHB206 similarly stated “But yeah in fishing guides I think it’s really important, right? To go out, it’d be tough if you guys hired somebody from San Diego that you'd taught all the ropes and that kind of thing, now I get that you get 100% of the people local, but I think fishing on the water and knowing the reefs are and that type of thing.”

Local hiring also had functional value in that it provided an experience that tourists enjoyed. As noted above, SHB093 (and several others) indicated that immersion in the culture was a part of the experience that they enjoyed.

Experiences with local culture were also often expressed in terms of epistemic values focused on learning or novel experiences. SHB110 indicated that a cultural experience provided the opportunity to learn something new, try new food, and hear new music. Similarly SHB200 indicated “I prefer being able to, you know learn about the area and stuff.”

Finally, several tourists cited the social value associated with their interactions with local people. For example, SHB383 stated “I’ve really enjoyed interacting with the locals that work here on staff. It’s wonderful.”

B. Discussion

Shaping tourism around tourists’ expectations historically meant altering natural environment to portray a beach paradise (Moore, 2019) and excluding local people from the landscape (Britton, 1982; Freitag, 1994; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2016). This research suggests that catering to tourists’ expectations does not require highly modified, manufactured version of paradise, or providing an enclave where local people are excluded or portrayed in stereotypical fashion. Instead, tourists to Small Hope Bay value unique, natural environments, and efforts to protect them. The data further suggest that interactions with the local community can enhance rather than detract from the tourists’ experience, providing support for forms of tourism that engage and empower the local community.
1. Environmental Quality and Impact

Many guests indicated that the quality of the natural environment and efforts to protect it were considerations in choosing a vacationing destination. While the level of importance varied across respondents, this demonstrates that Foundation can develop programming in ways that will appeal to several of these visitors in different ways.

From a functional perspective, many tourists value efforts to protect the environment and its quality because it improves their experience. Tourists perceive that protecting the environment improves the quality of dives, increases the quality of fishing, and makes beachgoing more enjoyable. To appeal to these tourists, the Foundation can highlight how programming improves visitor experiences. For example, it can highlight how coral nursery programs and mooring lines improve coral health, making for a better diving experience. It can also cite efforts to improve fish populations and marine life, which can enhance fishing, diving, and snorkeling opportunities. Further, given the frequent themes that emerged relating to cleanliness, the Foundation can promote clean-up efforts and broader programs such as waste management designed to create a cleaner experience.

Some tourists placed epistemic value on new experiences of being involved with conservation initiatives or learning about environmental measures, and the novelty of experiencing the “raw” environment. To appeal to those values, the Foundation can incorporate educational programming into their conservation activities. For example, tourists could participate in specialty diving certifications that teach them about coral nurseries and how they improve coral populations. Messaging can also highlight the unique and novel environments the programs are designed to protect.

Finally, tourists who cited emotional values expressed a desire to “give back”, distress at seeing environmental problems, concerns over operations that prioritize profits over environmental concerns. The Foundation can design programming and messaging that appeals to these tourists as well. For example, it can highlight opportunities for tourists to be involved in maintaining the coral nurseries, or directly solicit donations through an appeal to the need to “give back.”

Although some guests indicated that environmental quality and impact did not rank highly on their list of priorities in choosing a vacation destination, narratives that relate to environmental quality remained pervasive. Nearly all individuals expressed a desire for limited
development or a remote location in some form. Narratives of a “pristine,” “remote,” and “untouched” environment were nearly universal. Thus, preserving the natural environment can be in keeping with those narratives, and therefore may appeal to even those guests who did not rank environmental impact highly among factors to consider.

2. Community Involvement

The data suggest that many tourists value interacting with local community members, as well as tourism ventures that have a positive effect on the community. When discussing interactions with the community, tourists expressed functional, epistemic, and social values that often overlapped. This included enjoyment over experiencing new cultures, learning about new cultures, and social interactions with local community members. To gain support from these tourists for the Foundation’s training programs, the Foundation can highlight how those programs increase the potential for these types of positive interactions and learning experiences. They can also ensure that the training programs are visible and open to tourists, and that the students have the opportunities to interact with guests. This will not only appeal to tourists’ values, but it has the potential to provide interpersonal skills that are important for a tourism career.

Emotional values were evident in tourists’ statements regarding the impacts to the community. The Foundation can appeal to these values by demonstrating the positive impact their efforts are having for local people. For example, it can highlight success stories of former students, or include testimonial for how the Foundation’s programs have had positive impacts throughout the community. The Foundation can also highlight how its efforts will help the local economy retain more of the financial benefits from tourists’ stays.

3. Potential Benefits to the Foundation

Designing and marketing programs that appeal to tourists’ values has the potential to increase tourist support, resulting in numerous positive benefits to the Foundation. First, providing and marketing programming that appeals to tourists can help the Foundation solicit donations and financial support directly from tourists. Since tourists’ donations have provided the funding for the Lodge’s efforts to date, increasing donation potential provides promise for expanding the Foundation’s work in the future.
Further, marketing and visibility of these efforts may help draw new guests who seek out environmentally sustainable vacations or interactions with local people. The data suggest that lack of visibility surrounding the environment and community impacts may limit the extent to which tourists consider these issues when selecting a new vacation destination, as opposed to returning to a destination. Many tourists indicated they would like to consider these issues but couldn’t do so until they actually visited, because the information was not available. By advertising these programs widely rather than solely to existing resort guests, the Foundation may be able to draw new visitors with similar values to Andros Island, increasing the potential pool of donors.

Even with tourist support, the Foundation will not be able to achieve its objectives alone and intends to partner with other organizations and seek to influence government action. Given the importance of tourism to the economy, evidence that Foundation activities will appeal to new and repeat guests will help the Foundation in earning support from potential partners.

4. Limitations

While the data are promising for the Foundation’s work, the views are that of a limited set of tourists who visited Small Hope Bay Lodge during the summer and may not be representative of any broader population. Given the summer focus, seasonality may have impacted responses. For example, several fishers indicated that the summer was a poor time for fishing, suggesting that fewer fishers may have been present than would have been the case at other times of year, and that their impressions and priorities may have changed had the fishing been improved due to seasonality.

The study design may also not have revealed the full range of values tourists associate with the environment and community integration, because the interviews did not specifically probe for particular values. Thus, the answers may have revealed merely the most salient value that came to mind, whereas specific probing may have led additional values to emerge.

Moreover, some answers suggest that there was a degree of social desirability bias in the results. Due to the small and intimate nature of the resort, most guests had become familiar with the researcher and the work of the Foundation by the time of the interview. Occasionally, other guests and staff members also were able to hear portions of the interview, although efforts were made to keep the interviews as confidential as possible. Respondents may have tailored their
answers to meet the researcher’s expectations, or to avoid expressing opinions that would be viewed unfavorably by those who had overheard.

This bias may be reflected, for example, in the apparent lack of awareness of some interviewees regarding the fact that the Resort hires primarily foreign dive staff, namely white Americans, Canadians, and Europeans. Given the closer interactions among the interviewees, the researcher, and all staff, this may reflect attempts to avoid an appearance that the interviewees were speaking ill of any staff members or expressing unfavorable opinions about particular employees. Or, it may be that, because most guests are also American or European, they do not register foreign staff as “other” and/or accept their place as legitimate through colonial history or geographic proximately. Further research would be required to answer this question.

5. Future Work

Small Hope Bay Lodge represents only one resort on Andros, and many tourists to the island visit other hotels and resorts. While the Foundation intends to start with programs begun by the Resort, it hopes to expand its reach and implement larger programs throughout Andros. Going forward, it may be useful to understand the attitudes of tourists to other locations on the island, to increase the reach of the Foundation in garnering support. Future research could therefore expand upon this study by examining the values of tourists to other locations throughout Andros.

Future research could also attempt to further quantify this information with a different study design. For example, closed-ended questions could ask tourists to agree or disagree with value statements, and order them in importance. This would help the Foundation determine which values are the most important to the largest number of tourists, helping them to set priorities in establishing programs and messaging.

It is also critical that the Foundation’s work integrate community priorities into any programming design. While the views of tourists are important in marshalling donations and support, they should not be the sole determinant of the Foundation’s focus. To make decisions on tourists’ attitudes alone without integrating local stakeholder opinions would undermine the goals of empowering the community many of these programs are designed to achieve. Therefore, the Foundation should not act on these data alone, but should actively engage local community members to aid in strategic planning and programming design.
Finally, the Foundation’s efforts to create local training programs are unlikely to solve the lack of local capacity on Andros in the dive industry on their own. Thus, this Project now turns to assessing what barriers prevent community engagement in the dive industry throughout the Bahamas.

VII. Barriers to Community Engagement in the Dive Industry

A. Results of Dive Professional Interviews

The dive professional respondents agreed that the dive industry has positive impacts on local communities through generation of revenue. Several respondents also agreed that the dive industry had positive effects on the environment through generating awareness of environmental issues and taking a leadership role in conservation programs. For example, two respondents described their first-hand experience with training local Bahamians and the positive results. One respondent indicated, “I saw a lot of Bahamian instructors who didn't even know what to do with their lives, had no direction, had no job, and then they got into shops that sponsored them up to instructors, it changed their lives.” Another reflected on the positive impacts dive training had in terms of environmental awareness, reflecting on their own experience in becoming a diver:

I was a non-diver before I got into management here. I always liked the ocean, but becoming a diver, it really changes your perspective on the ocean itself…. because, you know, it, it’s just not a sort of food for people to eat, but it sustains so much of the land itself…. And just realizing that, like, it’s a world that needs to be protected. And we have an obligation to protect it, ’cause we’re only visiting there as well. But we like it, and they allow us that and we need to protect it, ya know.

However, every interviewee cited lack of capacity in some respect as a barrier to increased community engagement in the dive industry. Most indicated that they would generally prefer to hire Bahamians rather than foreign staff to avoid paying for a $5000 work permit for a non-Bahamian. Unfortunately, it is extremely difficult to find qualified applicants, particularly outside of Nassau. For example, one respondent indicated that they received hundreds of applicants in response to a job posting, none of whom were Bahamian. Several respondents noted, however, that as a result, training as a dive instructor provided excellent job security for local Bahamians.

Dive professionals cited a number of factors that they viewed as limiting capacity. First, they noted that the costs of training and obtaining the necessary experience were often
prohibitive, while the economic promise limited. Several respondents noted that even though there are many Bahamians who can obtain an open water certification for free from a dive operator, they often cannot afford to continue diving in order to gain the necessary experience, and the costs of proceeding through an instructor course are extremely high. At the same time, jobs in the dive industry do not pay as well as others requiring similar levels of financial commitment. This means that those Bahamians who can afford this training usually devote those resources to something else.

While some operators offer opportunities to sponsor local Bahamians in their dive education through instructor, so-called “zero to hero” programs, those opportunities are limited. One respondent indicated a reticence to offer such a program again, because in the past, trained individuals have left for other more lucrative industries requiring these skills.

Dive professionals also cited an inability to swim and fear of the water as barriers to entry. Several respondents lamented the fact that swimming is not taught in schools, and due to lack of environmental education, many Bahamians have an extreme fear of sharks. Lack of institutional support in the educational system was therefore a common theme.

Respondents also noted that languages can be a barrier to hiring more Bahamian staff, particularly for large dive centers that cater to international guests. Many of these operations must hire instructors who speak multiple language, yet most Bahamians do not speak languages other than English.

On the other hand, most dive operators indicated that the skills of Bahamians were otherwise comparable to other instructors. In some cases, there skills are superior, as one interviewee noted that Bahamians often have skills as boat captains that other instructors may lack. One interviewee indicated that Bahamians compared unfavorably with instructors from other locations in terms of desire to work and environmental concern, stating “it’s really hard to get people that are competently trained and really want to work,” and “as a generally rule, actually, the Bahamians don’t have that much respect for the environment.”

Geographic constraints were also highlighted as a barrier to more local engagement. Several interviewees noted that most Bahamians prefer to work on the island on which they grew up, which can impose barriers to mobility throughout the dive industry in the region. Similarly, one dive operator indicated that Bahamians do not want to work on liveaboard dive boats that would require residency at sea for long periods of time.
Finally, respondents indicated that institutional barriers were inhibitive of the dive industry as a whole. These interviewees felt that these limitations on the dive industry generally prevented the dive industry from realizing its full potential in providing positive economic impacts. Several respondents expressed challenges with operating a dive business in the Bahamas. For example, one respondent indicated that they had made efforts to establish new marine protected areas and environmental initiatives that would have increased dive tourism to the island, but they were met with little government support. Another respondent indicated that poor infrastructure, such as roads and water, on smaller islands meant resorts were small and therefore could not sustain a larger business that growing the dive industry would require. As a result, many dive operators in the Out Islands, including several respondents, are individual operators who do not hire any additional instructors at all.

B. Discussion

The Foundation’s work in providing swim and dive training can work toward addressing some of the barriers identified by dive operators. By teaching Bahamians to swim from a young age, the Foundation swim program can decrease fear of the water and improve environmental awareness and knowledge. Dive training programs can provide necessary skills that will make Bahamians desirable candidates who have a great deal of job security. The dive operators made clear, however, that to provide viable training from an employment perspective, training cannot end at the open water level. Instead, due to expense, the Foundation should provide training through the instructor level in order to maximize these prospects. The Foundation is uniquely positioned to offer this training, as resorts have limited incentive to do so due to inconsistent returns on investment.

However, to maximize the local capacity in the dive industry, institutional barriers remain prevalent and will need to be addressed at a larger scale. Key impediments such as lack of swimming and marine education, lack of foreign language expertise, and lack of government support cannot be overcome by dive programs alone. Instead, broader institutional changes may be necessary in order to further engage local communities in the dive industry. This includes additional language training in schools and institutional changes to increase tourism capacity generally.

These results are limited, however, by the small sample size. Attempts to reach dive operators were hindered by the fact that many dive operations are located on Grand Bahama and
the Abacos, which were greatly impacted by Hurricane Dorian. Given the small pool of respondents, there may be still other barriers that have not yet been identified. If the Foundation wishes to address these issues at a broader scale, more extensive research may be necessary and could further assist the Foundation in partnering with other institutions and lobbying for broader change.

VIII. Conclusion

The Small Hope Bay Foundation has the opportunity to develop programming that preserves the environment and improves community engagement, while at the same time appealing to tourists. Protecting the environment and employing local people enhances tourists’ experiences, provides new learning opportunities, and appeals to their emotional desire to “give back.” By designing and marketing programs to align with these values, the Foundation can appeal to tourists for financial support, and demonstrate to prospective partners the contribution of these programs to the viability of the tourism industry.

The Foundation’s dive and swim training programs, for example, can have positive impacts and provide opportunities that for-profit entities may not be able to offer. These programs can enable lodges like Small Hope Bay Lodge (and others) to hire more local Bahamian staff, providing tourists with the interactions they value. Likewise, these opportunities provide the potential for secure employment for individuals who may otherwise have limited prospects. At the same time, dive training can foster an appreciation for the environment that can promote conservation attitudes.

Dive and swim training programs alone cannot, however, address the capacity issues inherent that prevent more local engagement in the industry. Pay for dive positions remains low, leaving many who are trained to voluntarily depart the industry. Other institutional barriers and lack of infrastructure mean dive tourism in the Out Islands is generally small-scale, and cannot support employment of many more individuals, whether Bahamian or foreign. The Foundation has the opportunity to engage with government and other institutions and attempt to influence that development process through lobbying, but it must carefully consider how best to do so.

There may be some tension between improving upon these institutional barriers and the Foundation’s goals of environmental sustainability. Improving infrastructure and roads and increasing the size of resorts to support a larger dive industry may have the negative
consequence of moving toward the type of mass tourism that can be problematic for both the community and the environment. In the context of Andros, it may also move farther away from the “remote” environment tourists value. Thus, deciding which institutional change to support will require a careful identification of objectives and evaluation of trade-offs. In making these decisions, the Foundation must engage the local community and ensure that all decisions are made collaboratively with a broad range of stakeholders.

By working with the community to develop environmental sustainability and community training programs that appeal to tourists, the Foundation can work toward supporting a successful community-based ecotourism model. The Foundation can use conservation initiatives to attract new tourists, at the same time preserving the environment for not only those tourists but the local community as well. With community swim and dive training programs, the Foundation can also help the local community enjoy the fruits of those efforts, and provide opportunities for increased employment in the industry, increasing tourists’ opportunities to interact with local staff. By creating these programs in a way that tourists will enjoy and working toward overcoming institutional barriers, the Foundation can further its mission of creating capacity for an environmentally and economically sustainable Andros
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Appendix Table 1. Themes of Tourists’ Preferences in Selecting Vacation Destinations. 
Example quotations demonstrating themes that emerged in tourists’ comments regarding how they choose whether to visit or return to a vacation destination.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Example Statements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atmosphere</td>
<td>• “Mostly probably the solitude. Low-key. No TV, no phone, just nice and quiet and laid-back.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• “The feeling that you have when you're there.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• “Disconnect and kind of I'd say like almost like escape, just from the hustle and bustle of life, and like a little bit from people and what not.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experiences</td>
<td>Diving</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• “Yeah, visibility, something different, um a little bit of adventure.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• “I prefer on the more challenging dives follow the leaders. Not that I question my diving capability, I just can enjoy it more when I'm not having to worry about navigating.”</td>
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<td>• “It's hard to say because, you know, for here, it's a place I can dive with the kids, and they'll, they'll enjoy it. A lot of my diving destinations are, are, you know, I'm looking for places that people have never dived before…. But for this kind of trip it's just kind of places I can go with the kids that they'll enjoy. And where I'll be able to have some pleasant water time.”</td>
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<td>Fishing</td>
<td>• “Our husbands fly fish. So it has to be 100% fly fishing.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• “I think for me, it's, it, first now, I think years ago I used to look at bonefish and that's what brought me to Andros. But I think now it's variety for fly fishing. So there's a unique set of fish that we look for, so I, I think that's kind of what drives us away from Andros in a way, is to take a look at, you know, permit or tarpon or travali and some other species, triggers. But what drew us here originally was the bonefish.”</td>
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<td>General</td>
<td>• “This outfit specifically, like, there's a lot of different things to do. Like we're not really just like having to figure out everything yourself. Like we go SCUBA diving, we go fishing, we go to the blue holes. There's just a lot to do.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• “A favorite place to return would be because there's activities for our family as a unit. There's things for the kids to do and discover.”</td>
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<td>Theme</td>
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| Level of Development | “There's zero hustle and bustle here. Zero. You don't have to worry about anything. Cozumel's great, but it's a city. The BVIs great 'cause it's island hopping from place to place but basically you're going there from restaurant to snorkeling spot or to restaurant to snorkeling spot. Here it's, it's all right here, it's centrally located. Honduras, Roatan, nice, very similar, but you can still get into hustle and bustle there.”
|                      | “Well, I loved the fact when I looked at this huge island that like half of it was parkland, so I knew that it was gonna be lower on the human population and higher on the wildlife population because of that.”
|                      | “Whenever you're looking at the scenery, like just the place, what you guys put on you can just tell everything is pristine, not really commercialized, you guys haven't just destroyed the beach to make it easy for guests just to go lay on the beach.” |
| Logistics            | “Ease of accessibility, boat time's not a problem I don't mind that, but I do like that it's close. The facilities as far as having good gear to rent or borrow if you need it.”
|                      | “I think we like the all-inclusive portion of it, for sure… Once you get somewhere you don't want to have to think about money exchange constantly”
<p>|                      | “How hard it is to travel to, how much it costs, of course.” |
| Operators Accommodations | “Good food”                                                                                                                                  |
|                      | “quality of lodge”                                                                                                                               |
|                      | “But you know we, we're not, you know, I think each hotel has its own draw of personalities, right? So, like we're not drawn to like the big, chic bonefish lodges that, you know, if there is one, I don't think we'd even go to it because I think they tend to be more bluff than, than really something unique to try out, you know? So, so the lodges we usually stay in are kind of like this. Rustic. Really intimate, homey.” |</p>
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<tr>
<td>Dive Operators</td>
<td>• “The facilities as far as having good gear to rent or borrow if you need it. The staff, dive staff ratio to visitor, or diver, is really good.”&lt;br&gt;• “The reviews are typically very telling in their, like, you know, these guys are small, um, they're really friendly, they're laid back. They let you choose your, you know, those are the ones we like, the ones that we would shy away from was they're very autocratic, you have to do things their way, there's a lot of rules, they jam all, you know 16 divers together with one at the back with one at the back and one at the front, and they're always yelling at you, you know those we stay away from.”</td>
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<td>Fishing Operators</td>
<td>• “What's the right term I'm gonna say? We call it fishy, meaning that someone really is, knows the waters, is not taking us to the same spots over and over, can spot fish well, and I would say is passionate about the sport as well as we are, that they don't call it early, and kind of take a relaxed approach to a full day worth of fishing.”&lt;br&gt;• “The other thing I always look for whenever I was looking through like the yellow dog site was if the lodge had equipment there just to make it where it wouldn't be so stressful bringing gear. I know I brought gear this time, but it's stressful 'cause we're actually borrowing gear, and it was gonna be double bad luck if we lost it. So now we'd owe that person money back. So I noticed you guys do have gear so when we return I doubt if I'll bring stuff next time.”</td>
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<td>General Tour Operators</td>
<td>• “I think we just try to get a sense of the reputation.”&lt;br&gt;• “Yeah, and hopefully they know, they have some um, knowledge of the biology and the environment. So not just teaching the skills, but to be able to teach us about the place too.”</td>
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<td>Example Statements</td>
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| Community Involvement         | • “And is it giving jobs to local people, that's like a really big deal for me. A lot of my research has been in women in developing countries, especially. But, in my more recent work I've been working in also job creation situations. But yeah. Is it creating jobs for the local people, and is the money ending up in the pockets of the local people.”  
• “Hire locals. Support the locals. Especially with that type of kind heart. And attitude. That's really important for me.”  
• “And I would say, though, that I feel like what I've noticed here is that the locals are, are treated more like family, that it's, it's less of a colonialistic feel that what we've seen at other places.” |
| Interactions with staff       | • “I think it's been a great mix of locals and foreigners here. It's not like so excessive where there's no value in it. We've loved talking to, to Sarah or Dan or whomever from wherever and they bring their experience traveling the world. And their, you know their local flair or whatever. But they bring their experience from traveling the world. But we do have the opportunity because we do fishing or a blue hole tour, or, you know an inland tour, something like that, that that gives us opportunities to talk to locals and get their perspective as well. So it's been a really good mix. It's not like, you know over exaggerated with foreigners.”  
• “I mean they care, and, I don't know if I haven't explored outside Small Hope, but it just seems like the people aren't being forced to be nice. They're just genuinely nice, so I, I would say that probably transfers out farther.” |
<table>
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| Environment         | • “I think coming to a place like this, that that's the, the one commonality, we're all from different experiences, different backgrounds, different interests, but the one commonality is you kind of have to like a place like this. It's not the Hyatt, or the Marriot, or whatever, right? So, so all these people are kind of seeking that, and I think they do value that, at least we all value a certain level of conservation effort.  
  • “The environment stuff? Oh, yeah. Well, very. Totally very. I would rather go to a place that was, a tent in a really beautiful place, ecologically, than a swanky hotel that maybe had already, you know they're dredging the beach, and the reef is all, you know in danger, and for sure. I think that's, that's a major part of where we go, to pick to travel, isn't it honey?”  
  • “The environmental, the environmental impact and footprint is probably the biggest. I'd rather have that the creature comforts of a fancy place.” |
| Quality             | • “I think it's a special place, so, I hope they can keep, you know, I would love to see the reef come back to where it's not that carpet of algae, and, you know. I'm telling you, I remember, you know, thirty, forty years ago when I was a little kid lived on Davis Creek, the reefs were way different. They were way different. There was so much more color. So, hopefully it can come back, but... I don't know. I think it's more than just one problem.”  
  • “Well we like to spend a lot of time outdoors. And we can go backpacking and the environment is key for us. We were in La Paz and we were like next to, it was terrible. It was just like, I don't wanna come here anymore. Like an oil refinery next door. It was just like ugh. So it's huge.”  
  • “Usually the, the area how beautiful it is, how pristine it is, how untouched as far as human hands, the least amount as possible.” |
Appendix A. Outline of Tourist Interviews

History of Visits

- Approximately how often do you go on vacation each year?
- Do you often return to the same vacation destination multiple times, or do you prefer to visit new locations?
  - IF RETURN: What is it about a destination that makes you return multiple times?
- Is this your first trip to the Bahamas?
  - IF NO follow up:
    - When was your first visit?
    - How many times have you visited?
- Have you ever visited other islands in the Bahamas?
  - IF YES follow up:
    - Which other islands have you visited?
    - How many times have you visited [other islands]?
    - How does Andros compare to those other islands in the Bahamas?
- [If not first visit to the Bahamas] Is this your first visit to Andros Island?
  - IF NO follow up:
    - When was your first visit?
    - How many times have you visited?
    - Have you ever stayed anywhere on Andros other than Small Hope Bay Lodge?

Reasons for visiting Andros

Repeat Guests:

- Do you remember how you first learned about Andros Island?
- When you first visited, why did you choose Andros?
- What made you decide to come back to Andros?

First time Guests:

- How did you first learn about Andros Island?
- Why did you choose to visit Andros?

Purpose of Visit / Activities

- What activities do you plan to participate in while you’re on Andros?
  - Follow-up questions regarding whether they’ve been SCUBA diving before / if so how long, how many dives, certification level
- Was one of those activities the main reason you decided to visit Andros?
- Have you [dove/fish/snorkeled/etc.] in other vacation destinations?
  - IF YES
    - Where else?
    - How does Andros compare?
- For divers/snorkelers/fishers:
  - What do you look for in a [activity] destination?
  - What do you look for in a [activity operator] when choosing among operators?
Environmental Attitudes

- How does the quality of the environment you’ve seen on Andros compare to other places you’ve visited on vacation?
- How do you think the impact of [diving/snorkeling/fishing] on the environment in Andros compares to other destinations?
- Are you aware of any conservation activities happening on Andros Island?
  - If YES:
    - Which ones are you aware of?
    - What is your opinion of [activities]?
    - How do these activities compare to conservation activities in other [primary activity] destinations you’ve visited?
- I understand that choosing a [primary activity] destination is a complicated choice that involves a number of different factors. Do you consider the quality of the environment when choosing a [primary activity] destination?
  - If YES:
    - How do you take it into account?
    - How important is that in comparison to other considerations?
  - Do you consider what kind of impact a [activity] operation has when choosing a vacation destination?
    - What do you look for in determining the environmental impacts of a [primary activity] destination?
    - How do you decide if an operation has a positive or negative environmental impact?
    - How important is that in comparison to other considerations?

Community Impacts

- From what you’ve seen here, how does the local involvement in the tourism industry on Andros compare to other vacation destinations you’ve visited?
- Does it matter to you whether a [activity] operation hires local staff as [dive staff / fishing guides / etc] as opposed to foreign staff?
  - If YES: How?
  - Does it affect your decision of whether to return to a location?
    - If YES: How do you balance this with all the other factors in choosing a [primary activity] destination?

Do you have anything else you’d like to add about the topics we’ve discussed today?
Appendix B. Outline of Dive Operator Interviews.

[Questions may be modified slightly or skipped for very small dive operations for whom certain questions are inapplicable]

How many instructors does your dive center employ?
- Of those, how many are Bahamian?

How many certified divemasters does your dive center employ?
- Of those, how many are Bahamian?

How many dive guides who are not certified divemasters or instructors does your dive center employ?
- Of those, how many are Bahamian?

How many other employees does your dive center employ?
- Of those, how many are Bahamian?
  - What roles do these individuals serve in your dive center?

Do you typically hire employees who are already instructors or certified divemasters, or do you train people to fill that role?

When you post a job for a dive instructor, approximately what percentage of applicants are typically Bahamian?

What about for divemaster jobs?

What sort of skills or training do you look for when hiring an instructor or certified divemaster candidate?

What sort of skills or training do you look for when hiring someone you plan to train to become a divemaster or instructor?

Do you believe there are any barriers that prevent your dive center from hiring more Bahamian dive staff than it currently does?

If YES: What are those barriers?

In general, when first hired, how do the skills or training of Bahamian dive professionals compare to that of candidates from other countries?

Would you prefer that other dive centers in the Bahamas hire more Bahamian dive professionals than they currently do?
What is your opinion regarding the impact of the dive industry on the local community? Is the impact very positive, somewhat positive, somewhat negative, or very negative?

Why do you think it is [answer]?

Do you think there is any way that the impact of the dive industry on the local community could be improved?

If so, what?

What is your opinion regarding the impact of the dive industry on the natural environment? Is the impact very positive, somewhat positive, somewhat negative, or very negative?

Why do you think it is [answer]?

Do you think there is anything the dive industry could do to improve that impact?

If so, what?

Can you describe the environmental attitudes of the dive professionals employed at your dive center?

Can you explain why you said [answer]?

How do you think the environmental attitudes of individuals employed in the dive industry compare to those who are not employed in the dive industry?

Can you explain why you said [answer]?

Now I’d like to ask you a little bit about the kind of customers your dive operation serves. Can you tell me a little bit about your typical customer demographic?

And what kind of environmental attitudes do you see in most of your customers?

Do you think it matters to your customers what kind of impact a diving operation has on the environment?

Do you think the level of environmental awareness of your dive professionals is something that matters to your customers?

Do you think it matters to your customers whether the professionals they’re diving with are local?

Do you have anything else you’d like to add regarding these topics?